GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:442
ANSWERED ON:18.04.2001
DESTRUCTION OF BUDDHIST STATUES IN AFGHANISTAN
SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL;YOGI ADITYANATH

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Taliban militia in Afghanistan has destroyed the Buddhist statues at Bamiyan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Indian Government have taken up the issue with various countries including UNO; and

(d) if so, their response thereof.

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a)-(d) A statement is placed on the table of the House.

Statement referred to in Parts (a) to (d) of the answer to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 442 to be answered on 18.4.2001 Following the issue of a decree on 26th February, 2001 ordering the destruction of all statues in Afghanistan, appeals were addressed internationally to the Taliban not to destroy historical works of art, being the heritage of all mankind. The Buddha Statues at Bamyan were specifically mentioned. The Taliban militia completely disregarded international opinion and appeals and carried out this act of cultural vandalism over a period of time. In a statement issued on 27th February, 2001, the Government condemned the Taliban decree and called upon them to ensure full protection of Bamiyan Buddhas and all other relics. On 2nd March, 2001, the External Affairs Minister made a statement in both Houses of Parliament in which he, inter-alia offered to bring these artifacts to India for safe keeping for the Afghan people. On the same day both Houses of Parliament adopted unanimous resolutions condemning this barbarism. The Government also raised this issue internationally. Prime Minister wrote to several Heads of Governments, including the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General and to Heads of Governments of countries with Buddhist populations like Bhutan, Japan, Sri Lanka, Lao People`s Democratic Republic, Mongolia amongst others urging that the collective voice of humanity be raised against this outrage and that the Taliban be made to see reason. India co-sponsored a UNGA resolution adopted on 9th March, 2001 on the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and other manifestations of Afghanistan`s pre-Islamic art. The Resolution called upon the Taliban to abide by their previous commitments to protect Afghanistan`s cultural heritage from all acts of vandalism, damage and theft. There was widespread international condemnation of the Taliban militia`s actions. The UN Secretary General, Director General of UNESCO, European Union and several Muslim countries were severely critical of the Taliban militia. During Prime Minister`s recent visit to Iran, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran while condemning the Taliban actions said that they had brought a bad name to Islam.